



# Data Points

RESULTS FROM THE 1997 CALIFORNIA WOMEN’S HEALTH SURVEY

Women’s desire for and ability to access care for mental health conditions are likely to be influenced by a variety of factors associated with their employment status. Recent welfare reform policy and law changes include provisions designed to encourage women to return to the work force. Women with mental health conditions may have more difficulty than other women in making this transition. Assessing the need for providing care to these women is important for planning interventions to return women to the workforce. The 1997 California Women’s Health Survey provided the opportunity to explore the relationship between access to mental health care and status of employment.

The survey asked women age 18 and over: **“In the last 12 months, did you ever want help with personal or**

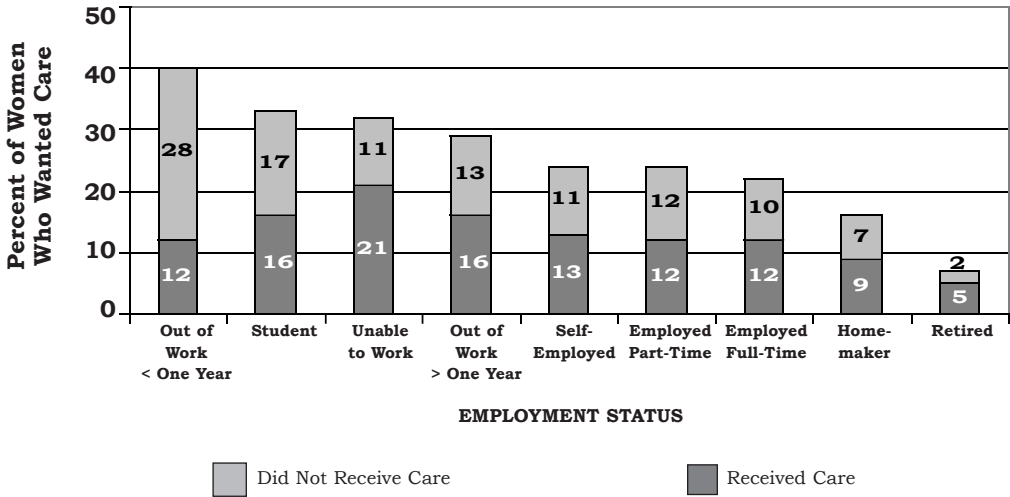
**family problems from a mental health professional such as a social worker, psychiatrist, psychologist or counselor?”** and **“Did you get the help you wanted?”** Women were also asked their employment status.

- Overall, 21% of women wanted mental health care; of these, 53% received care.
- Women out of work less than one year were most likely to want mental health care, but least likely to receive care if they wanted it. Only 30% of these women received the care they wanted.
- Retired women were least likely to want mental health care, but most likely to receive care if they wanted it.

## RECEIPT OF MENTAL HEALTH CARE AMONG WOMEN, BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS; CALIFORNIA, 1997

*Office of Women’s Health*  
*Maternal and Child Health Branch*  
*Department of Mental Health, Systems of Care Division*

Desire for and Receipt of Mental Health Care Among Women, By Employment Status; California, 1997



**Public Health Message:**

*Among respondents to this survey, women who reported being out of work were more likely than other women to want mental health care, but less likely to receive care if they wanted it. Further studies are needed to explore the reasons why some women do not receive the care they want.*

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